

What Families of Young Children Can Expect During a Virtual Assessment



In some programs, virtual assessments are the main way assessments happen. You may be offered a virtual assessment for your child or be thinking about asking for one. This guide will help you understand what a virtual assessment is and how it can benefit your family.

In a virtual assessment, one or more assessors are not physically present with the child. They use video calls—on a phone, tablet, or computer—to learn about what your child knows and can do.

This guide focuses on virtual authentic assessment. This means assessors observe your child in a familiar place, like home, during play and everyday activities.

Assessors will observe your child and may ask you—or another familiar adult—to intentionally play or participate in daily routines that show your child’s skills. For example, playing with a favorite toy, taking turns in a game, eating a snack, or walking between rooms.

Five Things to Know About Virtual Authentic Assessment

1 *Virtual assessments can show a clear picture of what your child knows and can do*

Assessors see your child in a familiar space with people they know. This helps your child feel comfortable and act naturally. It gives assessors a realistic picture of your child’s skills.

“I think [virtual assessment] would be better just because then the kids are in their natural environment. They’re showing you all of their skills. They’re doing things that they can, and you get to see more of them being themselves.”

— Parent

2 *Virtual assessments give you access to more specialists*

Your child can be assessed by a specialist, even if that person lives far away. This helps make sure your child gets the support they need, no matter where you live.

“We have more collaboration because I can partner [the family with] the right team, whether they live near each other or not. I can put them together because, via Zoom, they don’t have to be near each other. So, I think it just gives us better quality, a better ability to adapt for needs, and just more access to assessment.”

— Local program director

3 *Virtual assessments are often scheduled more quickly*

Since no driving is required, virtual assessments often happen sooner than in-person ones. That means less waiting and quicker decisions about how to support your child.

“On my side of things, with the telehealth appointment, it was like a two-week wait, but to get into an in-person appointment, I was waiting [much longer].”

— Parent

4 *Virtual assessments offer flexible scheduling*

You can invite others to join the assessment even if they aren't nearby. It's also easier to reschedule, for example when someone is sick or something else comes up.

“If anything, it was more convenient for me as a mom of a little kid ... We were interrupted less by doing it over the phone.”

— Parent

5 *Your involvement matters—you know your child best*

You and others who know your child well are an important part of virtual authentic assessment. You'll play with your child and share what you know about their strengths, routines, and how they learn. The assessors want to hear from you and see your child in action. Your knowledge will help them understand your child better.

“The parent interview piece is so vital to getting a true picture of who this child is, the child's going to act completely differently in a comfortable environment with caring caregivers than they ever are in an assessment room, or even with strangers in their own home. We value that piece because [parents are] the primary educator of their child. They know their child better than anybody else.”

— Local program director

Once you've scheduled a virtual assessment for your child, take a look at our [“Tips to Help Families Prepare”](#) resource so you can get the most out of the assessment.

To access this and other resources, visit <https://inteca-idea.org/va-family-overview/>

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